

Ontario. Transportation, Royal  
Comm. on, 1938

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BRIEF SYNOPSIS

OF

**Recommendations**

OF

**The Ontario Association of Rural Municipalities**

TO

**The  
Royal Commission on Transportation**

**April 8th, 1938**

To the Chairman and Members  
of the Royal Commission on  
Transportation:

The Ontario Association of Rural Municipalities was organized in 1933 with a membership composed of twenty-six municipalities and without Government assistance of any kind, it has steadily grown until it now comprises One Hundred and Sixty Municipalities.

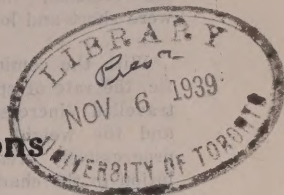
The Association was formed for the purpose of endeavoring to promote the collective interests of

townships, villages and small towns.

One of its major fields of activity is to try to secure an equitable distribution of the cost of public services.

It is safe to say that in townships and villages, by far the largest single item of municipal expenditure now is for road and street building.

Prior to the advent of motor vehicles a very cheaply constructed and comparatively narrow roadway



add. & Professor Jackson

sufficed for the needs of slow moving vehicles; distances travelled were short and loads were light.

With the coming of motor traffic, the rate of speed and distances travelled increased tremendously and the weight of loads became progressively greater. This revolution in the character of vehicular traffic took place within a short span of years and it necessitated extensive road building programs on the part of the Provincial Government and County Councils, so much so that county rates jumped to such an extent that very little of the proceeds of municipal taxation was left to townships and villages for road and street building.

To illustrate, in the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, the levy for road building increased from zero in 1916 to \$325,184.90 in 1928. It was equivalent to 62 per cent. of the total county levy and it represented a tax levy of 8.52 mills. In the Village of Chesterville as between the four year period 1917-20 and 1927-30 road building costs increased by 316 per cent., an increase in mill rate of 4.94 mills. The combined increase being equivalent to a tax rate of 13.46 mills. We take the above named Counties as an example because it provides a fair picture of the situation in other Counties and is the largest County unit in the Province.

To relieve the municipalities of a part of this burden the Government instituted a system of county and township road building subsidies, starting in 1920 in townships

at 20 per cent., later increasing to 40 per cent. and last 50 per cent. of the cost of constructing and maintaining township roads. In the case of counties prior to thirteen years ago the subsidy was 40 per cent. and since 50 per cent., but there was no corresponding subsidy to assist street building in towns and villages.

It is fair to assume that those who benefit most from the use of the Highways should contribute most toward their cost. It is estimated that up to the present time the Federal Government has derived from customs duties, excise and sales tax on motor vehicles and parts the equivalent of \$300,000,000.00. The tourist traffic amounts to between 200,000,00.00 and 300,000,000.00 annually, the major benefit going to the larger towns and cities situated along truck highways.

The Provincial Government realizes about \$27,000,000.00 annually from gasoline tax, permits and licenses.

The motor passenger and transport companies use the highways extensively and this class of traffic calls for hard surfaced roads with costly base.

Considering the use that town, village and township taxpayers make of their roads, the cost to them is out of all proportion to the benefits derived.

The full amount of the cost of village streets and 50 per cent. of the cost of township roads is pro-

vided from the proceeds of a tax on property and business assessments and is inescapable.

Small village property owners and the poorer class of farmers must help to pay for roads that they cannot afford to use while many salaried men use the roads extensively and escape direct taxation.

### BRIDGES.

There are many thousands of bridges and culverts in the province, many of them on village streets and township roads, that are not adequate to the needs of present day traffic. They constitute a menace to life and property.

The Federal Government derives substantial revenues from business arising from Motor Traffic, made possible through the medium of our roads and highways. The Provincial Government derives large revenues from gasoline tax, drivers permits and motor licenses, made possible through the same medium.

Transport Companies, while competing with our railways use our highways for business purposes.

Non-property owning salaried persons use them and escape direct taxation.

The larger urban centres benefit through the tourist traffic. While the small urban taxpayer and the back concession farmer pays out of all proportion to the benefit derived.

Urban streets and township and

county roads suffer severe damage by reason of heavy traffic in Spring time, while the roadway is weakened from frost removal. The cost of repairing this damage is out of all proportion to the benefits accruing from the use of the roads at such a time.

In order to equalize to some extent the burden of the cost of road-building to ensure the equitable use of roads, our Association respectfully suggests as follows:

1. That the provisions of Sections 7 and 8 of the Highway Improvement Act be faithfully adhered to and the details made public in order to obviate misunderstanding.

2. That a substantial special subsidy be paid toward the cost of modernizing obsolete bridges and culverts.

3. That municipalities be vested with authority to regulate traffic over their own roads and streets during the Spring Season, while roadways are weakened by frost removal.

4. That special consideration be given farmers, fruit growers and truck gardeners to permit private trucking of their products. And in this connection our Association heartily endorses the brief presented by the County of Wentworth. (Sgd.) W. S. Milmine, President.

(Sgd.) Alex. Marion,  
1st Vice-President.

(Sgd.) W. H. Casselman,  
2nd Vice-President.

(Sgd.) F. A. Senecal, Sec.-Treas.



